Crowns and Power

Trace how three medieval events changed political authority.

SS24.8.7d "Analyze the effects of political events in Europe during the Middle Ages, including the coronation of Charlemagne, the Norman Conquest, and the Hundred Years' War."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle the political event in each paragraph. Then underline two ways that event changed who held power or how rulers used it.

Three Turning Points in Medieval Europe

1. In 800, Pope Leo III placed a crown on Charlemagne's head during a Christmas service in Rome. Charlemagne already ruled a large kingdom built through conquest. The ceremony declared him emperor, a title associated with ancient Roman rulers. It also linked his authority to the pope and the western Christian Church. This gave Charlemagne's rule a powerful religious claim, while the pope gained a strong protector. Yet the event raised a lasting question: if a pope could crown an emperor, how much power should each leader have over the other?

2. In 1066, William, duke of Normandy, crossed the English Channel and defeated King Harold at the Battle of Hastings. After taking the English crown, William replaced many English landholders with Norman supporters. These new lords owed him service, helping him secure control of the kingdom. He also ordered a detailed survey of land and property, later called Domesday Book, to help assess resources and taxes. Castles helped the Normans hold territory. The conquest changed who owned land and made the king's control over England more effective.

3. From 1337 to 1453, England and France fought a series of conflicts known as the Hundred Years' War. English kings claimed the French throne, and both sides fought over territory in France. As the war continued, rulers raised taxes and relied more on paid soldiers. This helped monarchs build larger armies but placed new demands on their subjects. France won and strengthened its king's position, while England lost nearly all its lands in France. The long struggle also encouraged people in each kingdom to identify more strongly with their own country.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Charlemagne's coronation affect both his authority and the pope's power?

2. How did William's land grants and castles help him hold power in England?

3. How did the Hundred Years' War change what rulers asked of their subjects?

4. Compare one political effect of the Norman Conquest with one political effect of the Hundred Years' War in England.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise a ruler who has just won a disputed crown. In five sentences, recommend two actions based on lessons from two different events in the passage, and explain how each action could help the ruler keep power.

ANSWER KEY

Crowns and Power

GRADE 8 · SS24.8.7d

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle the political event in each paragraph. Then underline two ways that event changed who held power or how rulers used it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Charlemagne's coronation affect both his authority and the pope's power?	**It gave Charlemagne a religious claim to rule and gave the pope a strong protector. It also raised the question of how much power each leader should have over the other.**
2	How did William's land grants and castles help him hold power in England?	**Norman landholders owed William service, and castles helped them hold territory.**
3	How did the Hundred Years' War change what rulers asked of their subjects?	**Rulers raised taxes and relied more on paid soldiers, placing new demands on their subjects.**
4	Compare one political effect of the Norman Conquest with one political effect of the Hundred Years' War in England.	**The Norman Conquest strengthened the king's control within England. The Hundred Years' War led English rulers to raise taxes and ended with England losing nearly all its lands in France.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Your Majesty, seek public support from respected religious leaders, as Charlemagne gained a religious claim to authority through his coronation. Their backing could persuade people to accept your rule. Next, record who holds land and what resources are available, as William did after taking England. This information could help you collect taxes and reward loyal supporters. Together, these steps would strengthen both your claim to rule and your ability to govern.

Accept other supported comparisons and recommendations. For Part 3, look for five sentences, lessons from two different events, two actions, and an explanation of how each action could help the ruler keep power.